



Michigan Department of
AGRICULTURE

**NEWS
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Jousma-Miller Elected Chair of Ag Tourism Commission

Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) Director Mitch Irwin announced today the election of Ann Jousma-Miller, of Gladstone, as chair of the Michigan Agricultural Tourism Advisory Commission. Jousma-Miller accepted the position during the Commission's first meeting, Wednesday, October 19, in Lansing.

Jousma-Miller was appointed to the Agricultural Tourism Advisory Commission to represent MDA, and also represents the Upper Peninsula (U.P.) agricultural community on the Michigan Commission of Agriculture. She is owner and manager of Kipling House Bed and Breakfast in Delta County. She has over 22 years experience serving as a liaison between state legislators and U. P. organizations concerned with agricultural issues. Jousma-Miller served as a regional representative for the Michigan Farm Bureau for 10 years, and currently serves on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the B&B Association and the Gladstone Community Development Committee.

"I look forward to working with such a diverse, talented group of people to look at issues surrounding agricultural tourism opportunities in our state," said Jousma-Miller. "There was a lot of excitement and energy in the room during our first meeting, and we have already begun to share ideas and explore the possibilities and challenges that are before us."

Also at its first meeting, the commission established subcommittees to look at the issues and opportunities surrounding zoning, signage, and promotion and awareness. The commission will meet quarterly and expects to have preliminary recommendations by spring.

The Agricultural Tourism Advisory Commission was created as a result of bipartisan legislation signed into law earlier this year. Under the guiding legislation, Agricultural Tourism is defined as the practice of visiting an agribusiness, horticultural, or agricultural operation, including, but not limited to, farms, orchards, wineries, or companion animal or livestock shows, for the purpose of recreation, education, or active involvement in the operation.

Within two years, the commission is required to submit to the governor and the appropriate legislative standing committees a report concerning the effects of local zoning on agricultural tourism; a model of local zoning ordinance provisions to promote agricultural tourism; recommendations concerning the use of logo signage to promote agricultural tourism; recommendations for other measures to promote and remove barriers to agricultural tourism; and any other recommendations concerning agricultural tourism. In addition, the commission is charged with undertaking various studies necessary for the report.

Over the next few months, commission members will seek input from those involved in agricultural tourism, through listening sessions and industry meetings. Input can also be submitted in writing to: Michigan Department of Agriculture, Office of Communications, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909.

For more information about the Michigan Agricultural Tourism Advisory Commission, contact Jeanne Lipe, MDA Office of Communications, at (517) 373-9790.

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